

**West Star Communications**  
Research Factum

*Methodology: Results are based on an online study conducted from April 21 to April 24, 2016, among 536 adult residents of the City of Vancouver. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region in the City of Vancouver. The margin of error—which measures sample variability—is +/- 4.2 percentage points for each sample, nineteen times out of twenty.*

**As you may know, the Vancouver School Board faces a funding shortfall of \$24 million in its \$477 million annual budget. School boards must balance their budget. In Vancouver, that would mean laying off hundreds of teachers and staff and cancelling programs. The Vancouver School Board blames the BC provincial government, saying it is underfunding education. The BC government blames the Vancouver School Board, saying it should close schools and make other difficult but necessary cuts to deal with declining student enrolment in the city. All things considered, who do you believe is the most responsible for the shortfall and consequences?**

Almost two thirds (64%) think the provincial government is responsible for the shortfall and consequences, while one-in-four (25%) blame the VSB. The only groups that are more likely to blame the VSB are BC Liberal voters in 2013 (52% to 35%) and Kirk LaPointe voters in 2014 (48% to 42%). All other demographics say it is the provincial government's fault.

**Vancouver School Board Trustees could pass what's called a "needs" budget that would include a deficit—which is not allowed—but that it would present in order to ask the BC government to reconsider increasing funding. Not presenting a balanced budget would however likely mean the BC government could replace elected Trustees with an appointed Administrator to run the Vancouver School Board until the next municipal elections in 2018 and make whatever cuts are needed. Thinking about this, would you agree or disagree with Vancouver School Board Trustees passing a "needs" budget even if it means they risk being fired and replaced with a BC government appointed administrator to run the VSB?**

A majority (56%) agree with this idea, while three-in-ten (29%) disagree and 14% are undecided. Support is uniform across all groups, and reaches 61% among respondents who have a child or a grandchild enrolled in a public school.

**Up to 25% of the Vancouver School Board's budget shortfall of \$24 million comes from additional costs not funded by the provincial government. Do you agree or disagree that school boards should be responsible for non-education related costs such as increases in BC Hydro and other public utility rates, BC Medical Services Plan premium increases for employees, wage increases for non-teaching and administrative staff, inflation and other costs?**

A majority (57%) disagree with making school boards deal with non-education related costs, while one third (33%) agree with this solution. Once again, only BC Liberal voters in 2013 (53%) and LaPointe voters in 2014 (49%) are more likely to agree with the idea, while all other groups disagree. Among respondents who have a child or a grandchild enrolled in a public school, disagreement reaches 60%.

**Do you agree or disagree with asking parents and schools' Parent Advisory Councils to make up for funding gaps for core educational services at the Vancouver School Board through increased student fees and fundraising?**

Roughly three-in-four (73%) disagree with PACs making up for funding gaps, including 81% of respondents who have a child or a grandchild enrolled in a public school. Even BC Liberal voters (60%) and LaPointe voters (70%) think this is a bad idea.

**In order to balance the Vancouver School Board budget shortfall of \$24 million, it is estimated that up to 25 existing schools would need to be closed to find those savings, with students currently attending those schools transferred to others. Do you agree or disagree with the Vancouver School Board closing up to 25 schools to balance their budget?**

Three-in-five (58%) disagree with closing schools to balance the budget, while one third (34%) agree with this course of action. Disagreement is strongest in the East Side (66%) and among Residents aged 35-54 (62%).

**The Vancouver School Board must balance its budget and make up a \$24 million shortfall. Please rank each of the following solutions from 1 and 5, with a 1 being the most effective argument and a 5 being the least effective argument.**

The most favoured solution (36%) is cutting back private school funding and re-directing it to the VSB, followed by using the budget surplus to provide additional funding to the VSB (29%).

Other ideas are less popular, including abandoning the 95% rule (16%), ordering the VSB to balance the budget or be replaced (14%) and appointing an administrator to replace the VSB (4%).

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